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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Washington, D. C.

August 1944

FACT SHEET ON TOMATOES FOR CANNING

THE OBJECTIVE:

To increase the use of commercially grown tomatoes for home canning, particularly by obtaining the cooperation of retailers in featuring tomatoes-for-canning in container lots at reasonable prices. Because of increased requirements for military and export purposes it is expected that U. S. civilians will receive about 45 percent less canned whole tomatoes and tomato juice from the 1944 pack than was available in the period prior to rationing. Moreover, present indications are that the combined 1944-45 civilian supply of commercially canned tomatoes and tomato juice will be from 10 to 15 percent lower than last year's short supply.

TIMING:

From now, through September 20. The exact time within this period when retailers in any particular area should feature the sale of tomatoes for canning and when consumers should purchase extra supplies will vary with local crop conditions.

AREA TO BE COVERED:

In particular, the states of Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri.

THE PROBLEM:

Tomatoes grown for processing often are sold on the fresh market when supplies exceed capacity of processing plants. These supplies come to market at the very time when Victory Garden production is highest and when consumers are most likely to curtail or stop their buying because of their own crops.

Latest crop reports indicate that the production of fresh market tomatoes in the late summer producing States will be 8,640,000 bushels. This is 7 percent less than the 1943 crop and 11 percent above the 10-year (1933-42) average production. While no serious supply situation is indicated for the commercial production of tomatoes, supplies are nevertheless expected to be plentiful in view of large market garden and Victory Garden production which is not included in crop reports.

The indicated production of tomatoes for processing is 3,209,100 tons. This is 21 percent above last year's production and nearly 60 percent above the 10-year (1933-42) average. It exceeds by 1 percent the previous record high production of 1942.

Therefore, although the situation appears easier than last year, it is desirable that retailers push fresh tomatoes for home canning at such time as local supply is heavy, and encourage consumers to buy an extra quantity for home canning, to help preserve the crop.

THE CONTAINER SITUATION:

In view of the container shortage, growers may find it necessary to bring tomatoes to market this year in types of packages not extensively used for the local crop in the past. This should not hinder retailers from making special displays of these containers, computing prices and margins on their net content, and featuring tomatoes in suitable quantities for home-canning use to provide for easy handling by the consumer, and at reasonable prices.

KEYNOTE OF MESSAGE TO RETAILERS:

Retailer cooperation is needed to assist in the conservation of the tomato crop. Radio and press have already urged housewives to do home canning, and will continue to do so. Retailers can tie-in with this by:

1. Offering for home canning top-grade tomatoes, fresh and sound, in suitable quantities, such as 12-quart baskets, $\frac{1}{2}$ bushels, lugs, and other available wholesale containers.
2. Attractive pricing, especially on larger quantities, to make tomatoes a particularly good buy for canning purposes.

KEYNOTE TO CONSUMERS:

Home canning of tomatoes during the peak period of local supply will save much-needed tomatoes and juice for use next winter. Chili sauce, catsup and tomato preserves, etc., also can be put up to advantage. Home canning and preserving will save many ration points and provide the family with appetizing tomato products of high food value.

IMPORTANCE OF TOMATOES AS A FOOD:

Tomatoes, together with citrus fruits and raw greens, comprise group number two of the Basic 7 foods. The Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics found that in 1943 tomatoes and citrus fruits together contributed 29 percent of the total vitamin C value of the foods brought into the average American kitchen. If cooking losses are computed the percentage from this group is even higher.

Tomatoes are an efficient source of vitamin C. Due to their acid content, the vitamin C in tomatoes is more stable than in most other foods. Thus, there is likely to be less loss of this perishable vitamin in cooking and in canning.

Tomatoes are an economical source of vitamin C. They are neither difficult nor costly to can, and they may be made generally available, at all seasons, in canned form. This makes them a good food to rely on for the inclusion of vitamin C in the diet. By canning whole tomatoes and tomato juice, vitamin C may be obtained from the cupboard and canned food shelves at a time when supplies of citrus fruits in orchards and on food counters are likely to be light. This is particularly true in the fall, during the lapse between the

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midyear and the fall marketing seasons of grapefruit and oranges.

Tomatoes are an easy product to can, have a variety of uses, and are a popular everyday food. Next to whole canned tomatoes and tomato juice, chili sauce, and catsup are second in value and important from a taste standpoint.

SPECIFIC NUTRITIVE VALUE:

Citrus fruits have a somewhat higher vitamin C content than tomatoes, but from a practical point of view, tomatoes - fresh or canned - or tomato juice may be used interchangeably with citrus fruits, providing the tomatoes are used in larger quantity. Tomatoes are also high in vitamin A. Although vitamin values will vary, one medium small tomato or one 5-ounce glass of tomato juice will supply about one-third of the day's requirements of vitamin C for an adult and about one-fifth of his vitamin A needs.

To insure the greatest vitamin C value, buy tomatoes produced in nearby areas that were picked when they were almost ripe. They will have more vitamin C than if they are picked green and allowed to ripen on the window ledge, on the back porch, or in some other convenient nook. Use tomatoes generously in season and can all that can be used to advantage. Tomatoes grown and marketed in summer have considerably higher amounts of vitamin C than those available on the markets in winter.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE:

Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables, AWI-93.

Pickle and Relish Recipes, AWI-103.

Tomatoes on Your Table, AWI-104.

Community Canning Centers, MP 544, contains information on the establishment and operation of community canning centers. Copies available from Office of Information, U.S.D.A., Washington 25, D. C. Copies of MP 544 may also be obtained from the regional offices listed below.

COMMUNITY CANNING CENTERS:

General inquiries regarding establishment and operation of community canning centers may be addressed to the Civilian Food Requirements Division in the following regional Offices of Distribution, W.F.A.:

821 Market Street
San Francisco 3, Calif.

5 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago 3, Ill.

Western Union Building
Atlanta 3, Georgia

425 Wilson Building
Dallas 1, Texas

150 Broadway
New York 7, N. Y.

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